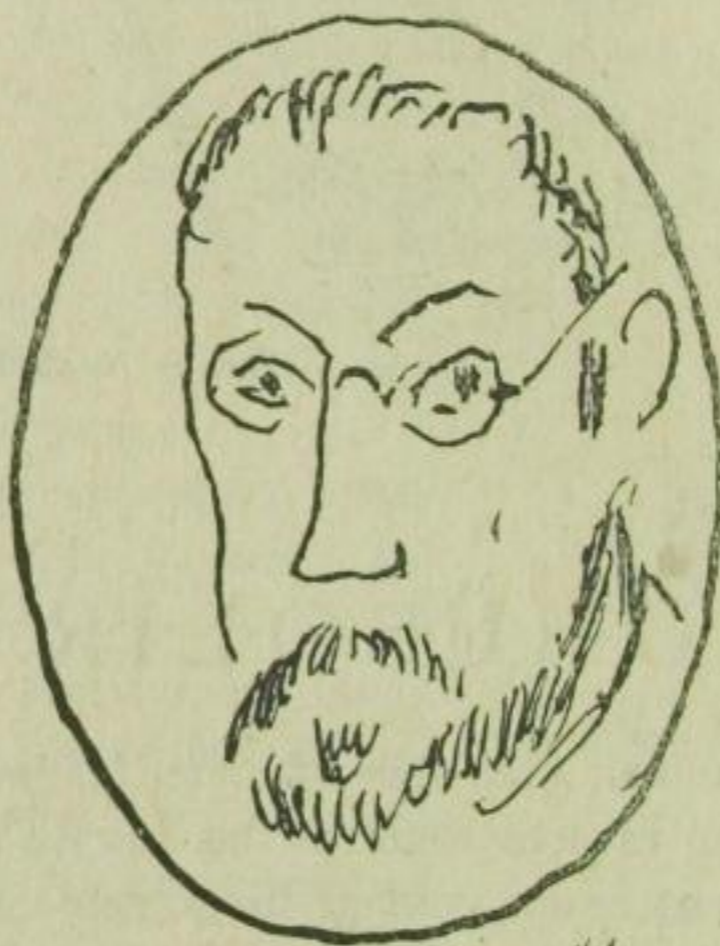


PASSION'S BOURN

It was many weeks since I had lost my mistress, and I vainly wandered in search of her. I slept in short fitful periods and then turned restlessly, with burning eyelids and eyes beneath them which ached to behold her in the dimness of my chamber. And in the long hours which were from the night until the morning, my hot hard lips craved the unction of her lips' touches. But no kisses came to them and my eyes grew hollow with their watching; my arms ached with the agony of futile embrace.

She had gone from me in the night, when I had sunk into slumber with her cool hand in my hair. I did not feel her move, but where her hand had pressed my brow, I found in the morning a livid mark, which scorched me by day, and by night made me crave with my soul for surcease, which she only could give.

It was at night she returned to me; or it may be I dreamed. It was as though all yearning paused, while into my ear the sound of her voice fell as pearls fall into red blood in vessels of old green glass. I held my breath, and lay like one dead. She told me where I might find her if I would. She was gone, and I arose



Henri Matisse

(Klichee der N. R. F.)

Selbstbildnis

and called to her and sought her. I opened the press where she had placed her garments, which were of soft silk of India and softer muslin, and upon them embroidered in gold thread and in deepcoloured silks, were roses and poppies and symbols which meant love, and others which meant hate. There was the bridal robe of greater beauty than all the others,

and it was embroidered with suns. Above all these, at the top, was the vesture she had worn when I lost her. It was torn from the girdle, as if she had taken it from her quickly. All her things were there; I had counted them as I waited her return, and knew she had none with her.

I sat me down and in the gloom I recalled the directions she gave me for her discovery. Then I started on my quest, and as I went along I thought of other strange things she had said to me, "Your love has grown since when I departed, it has not become cold because of absence, but despairing. Listen! If it is so great, search for me in a place from which you shall never return, and from whence I shall never flee." I was embarked on this search now, and as I passed into the night my body swelled with exultancy, for I knew I should find her, and fear I knew not, nor misgiving, for would I not lose my life for my love's sake? The cool breath of Heaven came down on my head but I heeded it not, save that I knew it fanned my love into fiercer flame. I passed out of the gardens of the house and